



**Special thanks to the students of H.E McCracken Middle School Bluffton, SC
and the EOC Staff for sharing their wonderful stories!
You Rock!**

"Mi maestro favorito es Mrs. Green. Ella es mi favorita teacher porque ensiñó me gusta la escuela. Ella también me enseñó cómo hacer amigos."

"Mrs. Green también fue el maestro bonitos en nuestra escuela. Ella también ayuda a otros niños en proplems otros. Y siempre llegó a la escuela con una sonrisa."

---Isaias Cazares

"My favorite teacher was Ms. Olmsted. She was my fifth grade teacher. She always gave us homework and to read for thirty minutes. She was a very strict teacher but really when you meet her she is very nice!"

"Ms. Olmsted always had good ways of doing things! She is a teacher at Bluffton elementary. I really liked Ms. Olmsted because she is the kind of teacher that didn't let me get away with things. She gave me violations when I needed them and good grades when I deserved them. Ms. Olmsted changed my life because I always was down on myself I called myself stupid and always thought I couldn't learn like other kids in all my classes. I now know I can do something by the help of Ms. Olmsted!!!"

---Macy Wise

"I was very scared that first day in fifth grade. I thought I had a teacher with enormous teeth and smelly green skin. Once I got in the classroom I found out I was wrong, she was a nice woman. She told us stories about her life. After that I had a great year knowing she was by my side. She always cheered me up when I was feeling down. Then graduation day came and I was so very sad, Mrs. Spruce wasn't going to be my teacher ever again."

---Spencer Pfeifer

"I walk in the door, as nervous as can be on the first day of school. Then I look at the teacher I have for my fifth grade year. She looks pretty nice. Her name is Ms. Plejdrup but little did I know that day she was going to be my favorite teacher I've had in years. She always made me laugh and when I didn't understand something she did her best to make me understand. The way she taught science made me love the subject when I had hated it the past years. She taught us prepositions and kept reviewing it until we got it right. I had a lot of fun with her, mostly when we went to our specials in the mornings. The days we had dance with Mr. Crabb she would always be making jokes and the whole class would laugh when she did. When we had the science fair she went over all the instructions and helped us whenever we needed it... On Friday's she would teach us about bullying and what to do if it ever happens to us. She taught us strategies about how to talk to our friends in a fight. Ms. Plejdrup made everything that used to be boring, fun. One day we were playing an activity during gym when Ms. Plejdrup comes by and all of a sudden the coaches tell us to all go and hug Ms. Plejdrup. It was hilarious because it was 100 students running up to her at the same time! When it came to PASS testing she helped us relax as much as possible during the big test. Then came the end of the year and I didn't want to leave her classroom. I miss her now that I am in sixth grade but all my teachers here are just as nice."

---Angie Castrillon

"I myself have had many teachers throughout my years in school, but one stands out above the rest. She brought me through the tough times and helped me get by. She made the year feel like only days. Her name was Mrs. Sharbaugh."

"When I first walked in that classroom on that cold day, Mrs. Sharbaugh was the first one that greeted me. She brought me laughter when I was feeling down. She also made the third grade fun when I thought it would be miserable. Mrs. Sharbaugh also inspired me to keep on going through the hard times. Even though I was in her class three years ago I still think about her today. She was the one who kept me going. I think she was a great teacher, and I wish I could still have her to this day."

---Quentin Danyov

"One time I was confused and shy in a new school, a new grade, and a new lifestyle. I thought I was going into a freaky world with people who aren't like me. I staggered through the halls and classrooms until it was finally social studies time. I walked in, sat down and it instantly felt different. There was a person at the front of the room teaching us with complete ease. I was so happy because she didn't talk down to us and expect to have to help expect to open our juice boxes for us; she talked to us like grown-ups in a meeting. I could tell everyone liked that."

"She was honest, and respectful, and according to her accent, no doubt Southern. Most importantly, she was Mrs. Donna Sue Spruce, my 5th grade teacher."

---Morgan Rizer



"My favorite teacher is my 5th grade teacher Ms. Yuzon. She is intelligent, and humorous. She slips out jokes like crazy. They almost make you pee your pants. She is so smart. You can go to her for almost anything and she can also give you the best advice ever!"

---Whitney Murrow

"My favorite teacher is Ms. Baker. She is a 4th grade teacher now but she taught me 5th grade. She was like a 2nd mother to me. All of my class mates LOVED HER!!!!!! My friends and I would sometimes get in arguments, Ms. Baker always new what to do."

"She loves beagles and other dogs and her sister and step sister are teachers also in the same school. I miss her ALOT!!!! But I know that my teachers in McCracken Middle school are fun and also as sweet. I am in 6th grade now and want to visit her some time. She used to say to me and my other class mates "I used to know you when you were knee high to a grass hopper", see she taught us 4th grade also. I am going to visit her soon I HAVE to !!!!! hope you like what I wrote!! I LOVE MS. BAKER!!!"

---Kelsey English

"When I was in fifth grade at Bluffton Elementary School I had the most wonderful teacher. Her name was Ms. Dori Plejdrup. She was so nice. She was very pretty too. She could also be strict but, she rarely was. I loved having a teacher who was so outstanding and also very inspiring. I loved Ms. Plejdrup. I miss her like crazy."

"One thing Ms. P told me is that even if you got something wrong don't worry about it and relax. I took her advice very seriously. She also told me to have fun in a sticky situation. She had a lot of helpful information and a lot of helpful sayings. She totally turned my attitude around about school. I love Ms. P a lot and I love all my sixth grade teachers too!"

---Emma Carlton

"My favorite teacher is Mrs. Mary Baker. She is my favorite teacher because she always was there for me no matter if I got in trouble or was just plain polite. When I ever felt down in the dump, she would always tell me to "never give up because you come to far to give up now." Mrs. Baker inspired me to become the nicest person that I could be. Even to the people that I didn't know. I shall never forget Mrs. Baker for as long as I still walk the face of the planet. I love you Mrs. Baker and I'll never forget you for as long as I live!"

---Moriel Williams

"My favorite teacher is at Mccracken Middle school, her name is Ms. Pray. She is smart, nice and funny. She likes to be funny but only if you have good behavior in her class. She really enforces the rules. She is very interesting when you get to know her. She is also very funny. Ms. Pray is also very sarcastic. Ms. Pray makes bad situations good but does it in a fun way. She gives out treats if you get the challenge questions right! She encourages us to get the right answers and actually try to answer to something you don't know. There is a certain thing we can do as a person and she makes sure we can do them. In her room she makes things as real as possible; like this week we are learning about ancient China and in Asian culture it would be rude not to take your shoes off in an Asian home, so she lets us take off our shoes if we have socks on of course as an Asian culture!"

---Megan Laseter

Dear Mrs. Harlow,

Mrs. Harlow I know it's only been about 4 months. But I have learned so much more than I knew. You make L.A. so much more fun. This year I hope we can do more poetry like we are doing now. I think L.A. has been more fun than it has been in a whole year. I knew it's been short but awesome. So thank you so much. You are the best teacher in the world.

---Celena Sorrentino

"Molly Binder my math teacher, also my first period teacher is a great teacher. I'm sorry let me introduce myself I'm Mariah Mervin and I attend H.E. McCracken Middle School! I'm in 6th grade and I want to talk about a teacher that I really appreciate! Mrs. Binder is a wonderful teacher!! She is strict when she needs to be and nice when she wants to be. Mrs. Binder is a wiz at math. I enjoy her class she does everything she can to help me! That is one of the reasons I appreciate her. She really does enjoy her job. I love how she actually likes to help us and just not try to teach us and move on. She takes time to explain it to her classes. She has over 180 students and she works with each one independently. That's another reason I appreciate her being my teacher. Those are all the reasons I love being in Molly Binder's or as I refer to her Mrs. Binder's class! THANK YOU MRS. BINDER!!!"

---Mariah Mervin

"Mrs. Rollings was my first grade teacher. Mrs. Rollings was so nice to me she would help me when I needed help. My mom was glad that she helped me because at first I was not doing too good in her class and then after she help me I was above average so I'm glad she helped me cause it has made a big difference on all of my other grades. I started making better grades. I'm glad that I had a teacher that cared what we did and helped any time we needed help or didn't understand so you can say that I had a very good teacher."

---Hunter Homa

"I have something I favor about every single teacher I had/have. Some of them are very funny. Some of them are very nice. There is just something special about every teacher in the whole world!!"

---Kendra Kuchenbrod



"Ms. Ray was my 5th grade teacher. She was my social studies teacher and homeroom teacher. She was very nice and did fun things with us. I truly think she is the best teacher ever. I had her for 2 years in a row so I might have got attached to her quickly. She was never in a bad mood. There are a lot of good and funny memories and very few bad ones."

---Jasmine Ricker

"My favorite teacher is Mrs. Davis. She was my 1st grade teacher from Rincon Elementary. She is my favorite teacher because she was very nice and fun. At the end of the year she had a pool party at her house! I miss Mrs. .Davis and hope she is the same way she was 5 years ago."

---Kayla Dickerson

She opened my mind,

To learning and hoping. She lead my mind and inspired me to hold my head high, Everyday I would come home with a smile stained on my face, She helped everyone learn at their own pace. Good morning songs, Goodbye songs. Ms. Mitchell was her name and Ms. Bruce before her. I love them... and I always will.

---Skye Folan

"I'm not here to baby sit you all" Mrs. Binder said, I can just remember like it was yesterday I came in the school like a stranger but in my classes like a member. She sounds like a bad teacher but she isn't she is just strict and to make you grow up and stop depending on others that have helped you in your previous life. Well let me tell you the real reason I wrote this wonderful description of my wonderful teacher, number one she is the teacher that made me to be able to have A's in math and that's a meager thing to me and my family, the second thing I admire about Mrs.Binder is that she is a person who speaks her mind and she doesn't care if you feel bad about the truth, the third reason is that she is a great person to share your feelings with and she is a teacher that's responsible am not saying that the other teachers are not responsible but Mrs. Binder is a creative, spontaneous, diligent, sincere, and trustworthy. That's what I think about a teacher like Mrs. Binder. You might think that I am showing off my teacher but your wrong she is very particular, and a one of a kind because she is the only one and can only be Mrs. binder, she will be the only one that will be at the moment that will help you in any way that's why I think that is a very special person in my life."

---Khadeil Ergas

"Here is a story about one of my absolute favorite teacher Mrs. Harlow. During second period when we came in and got quiet and seated she tolled us about one of our substitutes comments. She tolled us that the substitute said that we were the best class she ever had. Next thing I know Mrs. Harlow is giving out candy to everyone in the class for our very good behavior. That day was one of the best days ever."

---Ian Wilson

"My favorite teacher was my 5th grade teacher. Her name was Mrs. Spruce. She would tell stories of her life to help us learn. She was a great reader and found a lot of good books to share with us. She could make you feel guilty just by looking into your eyes. Then you knew you where in trouble. She wouldn't give you the biggest punishment in the world to teach you a lesson. You would just know if you did wrong or right. on top of all that she was a great teacher. I learned school can be fun if you make it fun. my favorite subject that year was social studies. I think it was the she taught it. She could make you laugh. I really miss Mrs. Spruce She teaches at red Ceder Elementary now. I wish I could have stayed with her forever."

---David Funk

"My favorite teacher is Mrs. Hagen. She is a really good teacher. She is also sweet and caring! While I was in Mrs. Hagen's class, she helped me a lot with my work. She helped me with my editing and spelling the most. She made sure that the kids who needed extra help got it so they could move on. She also covered everyone's strengths and weaknesses. Mrs. Hagen was an awesome teacher.

"Mrs. Hagen never gave up on me. She always encouraged me to believe in myself like she believed in me. She also pushed me to reach my goals. Mrs. Hagen always thought I could go far if I just tried. I will never forget Mrs. Hagen!"

---Jada Pierre



Dear Mrs. Hale,

Thank you so much for everything that you do as a teacher. You have taught me everything that I needed to know to prepare for middle school. Mrs. Hale, you are the best teacher! Thank you for teaching, helping, and being there for me. I hope you and your family are doing well. I'm doing fine in middle school. I just wanted to write you to tell you thank you!

---Mekale Skelton

"Teachers...Teachers... It seems like we have had millions of them. One teacher has always stuck out in my mind. Mrs. Donna Sue Spruce, my fifth grade social studies teacher, has her own way of teaching social studies. Mrs. Spruce made history come alive. She always had a story to tell and creative ways to remember important things. We watched videos like, "The Great Escape" and "The Courageous Heart of Irena Sendler." She talked to us respectfully and like adults. I will always remember Mrs. Spruce, the one who taught me so well."

---Mackenzie Anderson

"My favorite teacher is Mrs. Pratt. She was my 3ed. 4th, and some of 5th grade. She help me see how much fun books are to read. In 5th grade she got a job that she is in charge of all the G.T.in the area, I was sad and happy. THANK YOU MSR.PRATT!

---Christian Bowman

"My favorite teacher was my 5th grade teacher, Miss Jennifer Oye. There are many reasons I like her the best, but most of all, because she was fun and really enjoyed teaching. She had a way to bring

the dull parts of our school subjects to life and made them interesting. She made me try harder and showed me that I could accomplish anything."

"Miss Oye had a way of understanding her students. She new how to make me laugh and how to help me understand something difficult. She made me feel important whenever I walked in her classroom. Good days or bad, she always had a smile on her face at the end of the day. But most important, she was more than just my teacher, she was my friend."

---Raili Burton

"My teacher, Ms. Hagen, is a very special teacher. She has always been very encouraging to me to keep trying and never give up. I came to The United States 2 years ago from Honduras where the schools are not very good. I struggled a lot at first but I have come a long way thanks to teachers like Ms. Hagen. Teachers never get appreciated enough like they should and I hope that changes."

---Sincerely, Sirley Duron (age 12)

"Ms. Jessica Deckert, my favorite teacher of all time. Her blonde curly hair and big, bright smile greeted me every day when I was in 4th grade. It was my first year in South Carolina as I had just moved from New York. Ms. Deckert made me feel comfortable and like I fit in perfectly. She was the kind of teacher you could talk to about anything, but also gave you the right amount of discipline you needed to be the best student you could possibly be! Ms. Jessica Deckert, I will never forget you no matter where my education takes me!"

---Love, Quinn

"Would you like to know my most appreciated teacher of all is. Well here is my story about Mrs. Spruce. She was very nice and loved to make learning fun. She always shared everything with us. Like all kinds of stories from books and about her life. I wonder how she is now because she was my teacher last year in 5th grade. She filled us with stories of adventure, history, sorrow, and laughter as well. She was very athletic and has had quite a few injuries. Too bad not many people were in her class because the ones were like me were very lucky. She now works at Red Cedar Elementary school. She was at Okatie Elementary school when I was with her but she switched school."

---Evan Walsnovich

"My favorite teacher was Mrs. Briggs. She was my 2nd and 3rd grade teacher, and was definitely my favorite teacher. She didn't have any favorite students and she treated everybody the same. She would always brag about how good her class was. Whenever you didn't put any color in a picture and everything was white, she would say, "Why is your person in a blizzard". She would always play jokes on us when we played jokes on her."

"Mrs. Briggs cared about us so much that we had to color this poster that said " I CAN". And that's why Mrs. Briggs was my favorite teacher."

---Taylor Berloni

"My favorite teacher is definitely Mrs. Plejdrup. All of the students couldn't wait to go to school/science to see Mrs. Plejdrup. At the end of the year it was so hard to leave Mrs. Plejdrup."

---Zachary Jones

"Mrs. Cherry: The Life of the Party. Mrs. Cherry was my 5th grade Social Studies teacher at Okatie Elementary School. She previously taught my cousin, Josh Paszek, in his elementary school years also. Mrs. Cherry is kind, caring, and funny too. She always brought in something that had to do with what we were studying about at that time. Her father was in the Marines as a General or a Lutenant, I don't really remember. From what she told us about her Dad, I'm sure he was a very kind and loving father. I always got 100s in her class because she taught us so well. I will always remember Mrs. Cherry, and I hope to visit her at Okatie soon."

---Joanna P.

"Mrs. Smith I just wanted to say that you're the best teacher I've ever had. You might not remember me because it was so long ago. No matter how long ago I'll still remember when we hatched those chicks, and you cleaned up the poop. You were also very nice, and taught me so much. Like the coloring trick, and how there's no and in the alphabet. I still use those tricks. I hope you read this you're the best!"

---Jennipher Smith

"My favorite teacher of all time was my 3rd grade teacher Mrs. Thomas. She was really nice. She gave us prizes and rewards. She was awesome!"

---Ethan Bennett

"One of my past teachers that I appreciate is Mrs. Spruce. She taught me for social studies and math. I loved her a lot, she was always in a good mood and she could get you laughing in a heartbeat. She told the most amazing stories you could ever think of. I loved the way she thought. Before I had her as a math teacher I was not learning anything. Whenever I talked to her I felt like she really cared about my education. In social studies she did such a great job at explaining everything in detail. Now that I am in middle school I miss her dearly."

---Herson Cruz

"I would like to thank my 4th and 5th grade teacher Miss Oye. She was so kind and so helpful. She made me feel so confident. Miss Oye was so relatable and gave us some pretty fun projects. She will be in my memory book forever!"

Marvelous
Incredible
Super
Spectacular
Ohio Fan
Yes, she is awesome
Excellent

---Gabrielle Pollina

"Do you have a favorite teacher that you remember who really touched you, made a difference in your life, or taught you a valuable lesson? I do. My fifth grade teacher Ms. Stieglitz. There are many reasons why she is my favorite teacher, but here are just a few."

"My first reason is: Having just moved here from Maryland, I felt a little shy. When I met Ms. Stieglitz, however, we hit it off instantly and she made me feel right at home. From that moment on, I knew 5th grade was going to be awesome! My second reason Ms. Stieglitz is my favorite teacher is because she was always calm, considerate, and caring. Every Monday morning we would gather around in a circle, and then she would listen intently to everything we had to say about what we did that weekend. My third reason she is my favorite teacher is that she is the hippest teacher around. She always used to let us listen to music as we did our work and Ms. Stieglitz could even pull off the Soldier Boy Super Man Dance. My last reason why Ms. Stieglitz is my favorite teacher is because she always believed in us, and taught us to believe in ourselves too!"

---Ernaya Johnson

"Wow, I have had so many teachers that it's hard to choose my favorite, but if I have to I would choose my fifth grade social studies teacher, Mrs. Spruce. Mrs. Spruce is my favorite teacher because she would tell us funny, sad, scary, and personal stories. She would get off the subject but would she was always telling us what we needed to learn. Also she is a Carolina Gamecock fan so we got along pretty well and she called my Cocky. Mrs. Spruce would always find away to make us laugh every day that we had social studies. A weird thing that we never did was read right out of our texts books. She said that they were written by old white men and that they don't know what they are talking about. In other words I say that Mrs. Spruce is my favorite teacher of all times."

---Stephanie Tighe

Mrs. Cherry,

By Katie Hanley-H.E McCracken Middle School. The summer before 5th Grade I moved to Bluffton, SC. I wasn't really feeling good about it until the first day of school at Okatie Elementary School when I met my 5th Grade teacher, Mrs. Cherry. Mrs. Cherry changed my life, but not just in educational ways...Mrs. Cherry, or "Mama Cherry," taught an all girls class, and there was so much drama. There were a lot of fights, but Mrs. Cherry helped us through them. She taught us that all the challenges of girlhood were not so bad and you could work through them easily. She showed us how to get along and act like sisters. By the middle of the year we basically were sisters! "Mama Cherry" called us her "Cherry's Chicks."

In educational ways Mrs. Cherry helped me a lot! She helped me raise my grades in math so that I could advance to a higher math class, and she helped me enjoy social studies a whole lot better. You see, I was never great in math. Mrs. Cherry helped me understand math and taught in a fun way. In social studies she brought in a lot of old items that belonged to her family members and herself. She made school so much fun!

Mrs. Cherry is my favorite teacher, and I hope you can see why. She helped me move up to middle school and be very successful in it. Thank you, Mrs. Cherry! I will always be one of your Cherry's Chicks!

---Katie Hanley

"Average height, teaches Language Arts at H.E. McCracken Middle School, brown hair, and she likes reading. That's right, it's Mrs. Haarlow. She is the teacher I have ever had. She always makes me laugh. One time she decided to read us this book called "Once Upon a Cool Motorcycle Dude" and she said that the dude and the princess must ride away on his Harley Davidson. I just started cracking up! Everyday she has something fun planned. Such as: one time she said that we were going to be working

on fractured fairy tales. Nobody knew what they were. Then she said that they were like bending the real stories. It was really fun. Like I said before she is the best teacher I have ever had."

---Timothy Ortega

"My favorite teacher is Mrs. Molly Binder: Mrs. Binder thought me everything I need to know about Math. She thought me the other day how to do stem and leaf plot's. She showed me how to do median, maximum and mean. The best thing she thought me how to do is mode. That was the best thing she ever did for me in my life. What she said was that mode means the number that's there the most, she also said do some math when you can't find something just come and asked me. One thing I liked about Mrs. Binder and my other teachers like Mrs. Haarlow my ELA teacher, my Reading teacher Ms. Feuers, my Social Studies teacher Ms. Pray, and my Science teacher Mr. Lagrone they didn't give up on me. They always say told me to keep trying, but Mrs. Binder would say I would be right back hold on."

---Jerome Habersham

"My two favorite teacher's names are Mrs. Spruce and Ms. Yuzon. Mrs. Spruce was my 5th grade social studies teacher and Ms. Yuzon was my 4th grade science teacher. The reason I choose these two teachers is because when I needed help with any subject they would help me."

"I choose Mrs. Spruce because when I transferred to Okatie Elementary School my social studies grade went up a lot. The reason it went up because Mrs. Spruce explained the stuff like she was actually there. And I choose Ms. Yuzon because she is the nicest teacher I've met over the last 2 years."

---Helaina Bing



"My name is Brittney Hedetniemi. I am in 6th grade at H.E. McCracken Middle School and I have three favorite teachers. My 3rd grade teacher Mrs.Theiling, my 4th grade teacher Mrs. Hicks, and last but not least, my 5th grade teacher Ms.Plejdrup. Out of all of them, Ms.Hicks is my favorite teacher. Mrs. Hicks is a very kind and caring person. There were many occasions that she had taken time out to help me with my schoolwork for other classes. As well as helping me with my spelling and handwriting. For me, she truly demonstrates what it means to be a good teacher. She shows a genuine care for both educational goals as well personal goals for her students."

---Brittney Hedetniemi

"I have two favorite teachers. The first one is Ms. J. Smith, a second grade teacher at Bluffton Elementary School. One reason I like her is that she is really nice and creative. For example, when my Nana died she comforted me and gave me a stuffed bunny. I remember that to this day. The last teacher is Ms. Hallissey, my fifth grade teacher. She is also is nice and creative. For example, she let us act like other people in class. We also got to perform many plays. Those are my favorite teachers."

---Jeret Wease

"My favorite teacher is Mrs. Spruce. She taught me a lot. She is also nice. She taught about wars. She loves Derek Jeter. She told us important things to."

---Sam Urquhart

"For Teacher Appreciation Week I picked my favorite teacher Mrs. Plejdrup. Mrs. Plejdrup was the coolest teacher I had, she had two hermit crabs that we got to play with when we were done with our work. We did so many projects that we got to do. Mrs. Plejdrup was also very nice. Instead of calling her Mrs. Plejdrup we called her Mrs. "P". That is the reason why Mrs. P was my favorite teacher."

---Emma Nicolini



"To this very day, I vividly recall giving oral book reports in the 7th grade while our English teacher, Mr. Paul Rawl, sat in the back of the room grading our presentations. I was among Mr. Rawl's students who shook with fear, and dreaded his tests."

"A grade of an A was only the result of very hard work and studying - also, a desire to see Mr. Rawl smile. Through his stern manner, Mr. Rawl instilled in me a deep respect for the English language and love for reading. His required oral book reports at our tiny school in North, South Carolina, gave me a foundation to be able to confidently stand and speak before a group. Although I graduated from North High School in 1970, I will always remember Mr. Paul Rawl and be grateful for the influence he had on my life."

---Valenda Black

"Mrs. Judith Beaty was a no-nonsense instructor. She taught Latin and English at Seneca High School. Latin was not only a foreign language but also a dead one, and very alien and difficult for us adolescents in Seneca. Mrs. Beaty did not accommodate lack of effort or inattention. She insisted upon mastery of the logical structure of the Romans' language. That insistence gave structure to the messy intellects of young high school students and helped us do well in English, perhaps more so than in Latin."

"Mrs. Beaty could be an intimidating instructor, but her high standards helped me learn how to address problems and to make sense of the complexities of the English language."

---Frank Holleman

"I will forever be grateful for my 12th grade English teacher, Dianne Fergusson. A lifetime student of the work of William Faulkner, Dr. Fergusson introduced scores of young people to the beauty of Southern fiction. She loved what she taught, and her students were the better for it!"

---Dana Yow

"I was terrified. Eighth grade homeroom assignments and academic schedules had been mailed to the homes of students in Madison Street Junior High. I had been assigned to Mrs. Gladys Hammond's home room as well as her English class. Four hours of every seven-hour school day would be spent under her control. She invented "zero tolerance."

"Mrs. Hammond was perhaps the finest teacher I ever experienced. When I think back over the lessons and gifts of my education, I realize that her intense belief that every one of us could master the curriculum, could exhibit proper public behavior and could accomplish individual goals has guided my life. I'm grateful that I was able to move beyond adolescent fear and call upon her as I developed my teaching skills. As an undergraduate I was required to complete a number of hours in practica and permitted to accomplish those hours in my hometown. Whenever I had a chance, I did my practica with Mrs. Hammond."

"So, how did a gangly eighth grader move from angst to admiration--by diagramming sentences. Mrs. Hammond taught us to organize our thoughts and to express them properly." We learned more grammar than literature. For most of the school year, our evenings were spent diagramming twenty sentences. We carefully would lay out the subject and predicate, avoid splitting infinitives, debate the placement of adjectival, adverbial and prepositional clauses. Would placing elements differently change meaning? Not only did the placement of phrases have to be correct, the homework papers we submitted had to be neat."

"At every step in the process, she emphasized structured thought, analysis of ideas and precision in presentation. Isn't that what we want students to learn today?"

"Our school divided students into four groups. Groups One through Four were structured homogeneously and all too often economically. If expectations were to differ from group to group, no one told Mrs. Hammond. She gave the same assignments and expected the same results of each group. She varied her teaching and varied the amount of individual effort she expected."

"There was one small "issue" with my membership in Mrs. Hammond's classes. I couldn't diagram sentences. My papers were a study in erasures, tears and clear evidence that Blue Horse notebook paper was inferior or at least could not bear the brunt of repeated erasures from a number two pencil. Diagramming sentences was more alien to me than landing on the planet Jupiter."

"Mrs. Hammond responded to my papers with a sea of red ink. But her response did not stop there. She found time in the school day---with class sizes of 35-40---to give me extra instruction. She talked with me about how ideas fit together. She gave me extra homework. When my classmates took home twenty sentences to diagram, I took home forty. And every day, without fail, she corrected the forty sentences and found forty more to challenge me. She taught persistence and perseverance. Like many she realized I was not my brilliant brother and stated such, but she also demanded that I outwork everyone."

"Today, my energies focus on improving schools. For much of my professional career, I have "earned a living" analyzing policies and practices. The skills of diagramming are mirrored in my work. I am asked to lay out the client and services, avoid splitting principles, debate the placement of various policies into our educational system and communities. I "diagram" every day"

"Mrs. Gladys Hammond educated. She believed in high standards; she demanded that we learn and her insistence is imprinted upon our lives."

"Was she young, was she pretty, did she know the difference between Conway Twitty and Ringo Starr? I think not. But she could teach and for that, I am shouting her praises."

---Jo Anne Anderson

"Through the years there are several teachers who I would claim as some of my favorites; however, there are two who stand out as being the teachers whom cultivated my education. These two teachers are strong beautiful women from the inside out; Ms. Langley my middle school History teacher and Madam Hall my high school French teacher. Ms. Langley very stern and a no non-sense type of teacher truly pushed me to the best of my ability. At an early age I became fond of historical cultural events and it was Ms. Langley who first noticed my fondest of History in her class. She gave me the confidence to expand on my knowledge essentially to learn more about History. She also motivated a passion in me that no other teacher had ever done before. My love for History remains valued till this day because of Ms. Langley's dedication and timely attention in my delight to learn the yesteryear."

"Madam Hall much like Ms. Langley dedication as a teacher motivated a desire in me to learn more about the "Language of Love." She was a very soft spoken, caring, and compassionate teacher. I remember just like it was yesterday entering her classroom and sitting there in complete amazement thinking I was doomed because it wasn't a moment in her class that she spoke to us in English. All of her instructions were given in French from the start of the course until the end of the semester. Perplexed then as to why she taught using this approach prepared me for the next chapter of my life, College. Upon attending college it was required that all freshman were tested on their comprehension of the foreign language taught to them in high school. This gave my college an accurate account as to how to place me based on my level of understanding. Madam Hall's instructional method reflected highly on my score. I had gained great knowledge of the French language. I scored so high on my placement test I was exempt from taking a foreign language for as long as I attended school and for that reason and among others I didn't list, I am forever grateful to Madam Hall for her teaching style. Her method paid off tremendously!"

---Regina King



